

HARRY REID
NEVADA



DEMOCRATIC
LEADER
U.S. SENATE

November 8, 2005

The Honorable George W. Bush
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

The indictment of I. Lewis Libby, Vice President Dick Cheney's Chief of Staff, marks the first time in 131 years that a senior White House official has been charged with a crime while still serving in the White House. The charges, while not yet proven, are extraordinarily serious and deeply disturbing.

Although it is too early to judge Mr. Libby guilty or innocent of these particular charges, it is not too early for you to reassure the American people that you understand the enormous gravity of the allegations. To this end, we urge you to pledge that if Mr. Libby or anyone else is found guilty of a crime in connection with Patrick Fitzgerald's investigation, you will not exercise your authority to issue a Presidential pardon.

It is crucial that you make clear in advance that, if convicted, Mr. Libby will not be able to rely on his close relationship with you or Vice President Cheney to obtain the kind of extraordinarily special treatment unavailable to ordinary Americans. In addition you should do nothing to undermine Mr. Fitzgerald's investigation or diminish accountability in your White House. A pardon in these circumstances would signal that this White House considers itself above the law.

We also urge you to state publicly whether anyone in the White House – including White House counsel Harriet Miers or Vice President Cheney – has already discussed the possibility of a pardon with Mr. Libby. Particularly given that the American people are still in the dark about what precisely transpired in the White House with respect to the CIA leak, it would be highly inappropriate if there were such discussions going on behind the scenes.

Swift public action on your part will make clear that you take seriously perjury and obstruction of justice at the highest levels of our government and that you meant what you said about bringing "honor and dignity" to the White House. We eagerly await your response and hope that you will announce your intentions promptly.

Respectfully,